

Southern Pine Beetle in New Jersey

The Progressing Infestation

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry



Description: Pine, especially pitch pine, is the most common tree species on roughly 440,000 acres of southern New Jersey forests. The southern pine beetle (SPB) has infested 39,465 acres of these forests – nearly nine percent of the total—since 2001. More than half of this damage happened during the last five years:

Table 1. Four Year SPB Acres Damaged.

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Acres	14000	6800	6261	5646	1065

The infestation has expanded to the Pinelands Reserve, where the beetle is likely to affect globally rare plant communities. NJFS has been successful suppressing these upland SPB spots. SPB kills pine trees, creating hazardous trees and increasing the risk of wildfires. SPB is affecting communities and heightening concerns about wildfires in the wildland urban interface (WUI), areas where people and forests are in close proximity. The pinelands region is an especially fire-prone ecosystem.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) administers 30% of the affected lands. DEP is continuing to focus on suppressing SPB on lands under their jurisdiction. Through education and awareness programs, they are also encouraging private landowners and municipalities to conduct suppression activities.

In 2011, the Northeastern Area State and Private Forestry (NA S&PF) awarded a \$600,000 competitive grant to DEP to aid SPB suppression on both public and private lands, to boost community wildfire protection, and for outreach and education. In 2012, NA S&PF granted an additional \$340,000 to DEP to enhance SPB suppression and wildfire mitigation on State lands located in the Pinelands. With assistance from NA S&PF Redesign funds, DEP has created a cost share program to assist private landowners and municipalities with suppression.

Key Issues:

- The polar vortex slowed, but did not stop the expansion of SPB.
- Due to limited funding suppression activities must be prioritized.
- The permitting process in place to help conserve the Pinelands is an important factor in forest management actions such as thinning, salvage tree removal, etc. The time needed for analysis, documentation, communication, review and approval must be considered.

Accomplishments:

- NJ DEP is continuing to use the SPB science advisory panel, a group of state and federal experts convened by the State Forester to assist in formulating management actions.
- The permitting process, in cooperation with the Pinelands Commission, has been streamlined to a week to 10 days.
- Meetings are conducted with effected municipalities to encourage current grant programs and award grant opportunities.
- Notifications are made to potential effected municipalities to facilitate grant applications.
- The SPB Web site is regularly updated at: www.southernpinebeetle.nj.gov

- DEP treated 18 SPB spots containing one to two acres each in 2014.
- A cost share program to assist private landowners continues with suppression, administered by the NJ Forestry Association, is established with NA S&PF Redesign funds.
- Landowners that enrolled in this grant also participated in the Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP) for thinning and fencing. A total of 349 acres has been thinned.

Budget History:

Southern Pine Beetle Program <i>(Dollars in thousands)</i>				
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
Forest Service NA S&PF	\$600	\$340	-	-
Totals	\$600	\$340	-	-

Future Direction:

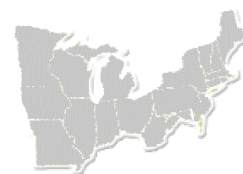
- The NA S&PF Morgantown Field Office and the New Jersey State Forestry Services will continue their collaboration to monitor the outbreak, assess needed actions, and communicate resource needs.
- Continue to prioritize and treat SPB sites on State land.
- Future Direction to explore options and identify areas of potential impact and subsequent preventative methods

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